is electrically connected to the second terminal. ~~and is spatially situated between the first strongly doped region and the second strongly doped region.~~ Finally, a fourth strongly doped region of the second conduction type is introduced into the surface of the semiconductor substrate and into the well region, and is spatially situated above the pn junction that is formed between the semiconductor substrate and the well region, and between the third strongly doped region and the first strongly doped region.

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IN THE CLAIMS:

Cancel claims 10 and 11.

Amend claims 1, 8-9 and 12 as follows:

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1. (Currently Amended) A lateral thyristor structure for protection against electrostatic discharge, comprising:

at least two lateral thryristors, which each include

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a semiconductor substrate of a first conduction type, with a surface;

a well region of a second conduction type, opposite to said first conduction type, which is introduced into said surface of said semiconductor substrate;

fig. 4

a first strongly doped region of said second conduction type that is introduced into said surface of said semiconductor substrate and is electrically connected to a first terminal;

a second strongly doped region of said first conduction type that is introduced into said well region and is electrically connected to a second terminal;

a third strongly doped region of said second conduction type, which is introduced into said well region, and is electrically connected to said second terminal; and~~, and is spatially arranged between said first strongly doped region and said second strongly doped region; and~~

a fourth strongly doped region of said second conduction type, which is introduced into said surface of said semiconductor substrate and into said well region, and is spatially situated above a pn junction that is formed between said semiconductor substrate and said well region, and between said third strongly doped region and said first strongly doped region.

2.(Previously Amended) The lateral thyristor structure of claim 1, comprising a field oxide region that is situated between said first strongly doped region and said fourth strongly doped region.

3.(Previously Amended) The lateral thyristor structure of claim 1, comprising a field oxide region that is situated between said second strongly doped region and said fourth strongly doped region.

4.(Original) The lateral thyristor structure of claim 3, wherein said first conduction type is p-conducting and said second conduction type is n-conducting.

5.(Original) The lateral thyristor structure of claim 4, wherein said first terminal is connected to ground, and said second terminal is connected to a signal input line or to a signal output line.

112 1st fig. 7 6.(Previously Amended) The lateral thyristor structure of claim 5, comprising a region of said second conduction type, and including a terminal that is introduced into a field oxide region, wherein said terminal is connected to a circuit that is being protected.

7.(Previously Cancelled)

8.(Currently Amended) The lateral thyristor structure of claim 6, wherein said at least two lateral thyristors are surrounded by a substrate contact ring.

9.(Currently Amended) The lateral thyristor structure of claim 6, wherein said at least two lateral thryristors are arranged symmetrically.~~, and in such that said doped regions adjoin one another closely, while said substrate contacting ring is removed as far as possible from said active region.~~

10.(Cancelled) ~~The lateral thyristor structure of claim 6, wherein said doped regions adjoin one another closely, while said substrate contact ring is removed as far as possible from said doped regions.~~

11.(Cancelled) ~~The lateral thyristor structure of claim 6, wherein said least two lateral thyristors are arranged symmetrically, and such that said doped regions adjoin one another closely, while said substrate contacting ring is removed from said doped regions.~~

12.(Currently Amended) A symmetrical lateral thyristor structure for protection against electrostatic discharge, comprising:

at least two lateral thyristors, which each include

a semiconductor substrate of a first conduction type, with a surface;

a well region of a second conduction type, opposite to said first conduction type, which is introduced into said surface of said semiconductor substrate;

a first strongly doped region of said second conduction type that is introduced into said surface of said semiconductor substrate and is electrically connected to a first terminal;

a second strongly doped region of said [second] 1st conduction type that is introduced into said well region and is electrically connected to a second terminal;

a third strongly doped region of said second conduction type, which is introduced into said well region, and is electrically connected to said second terminal; and~~, and is spatially arranged between said first strongly doped region and said second strongly doped region; and~~

a fourth strongly doped region of said second conduction type, which is introduced into said surface of said semiconductor substrate and into said well region, and is spatially situated above a pn junction that is formed between said semiconductor substrate and said well region, and between said third strongly doped region and said first strongly doped region.